

PRESIDENT BUSH ANNOUNCES HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE THAT INCLUDES BLOCK GRANT FOR CTE

January 14, 2005 - On Wednesday, President Bush spoke at a high school in Northern Virginia on his plan to seek \$1.5 billion in his FY 06 budget request for a high school intervention initiative. Below is a summary of the proposed initiative:

- Consolidated funding for high school improvement programs (see below);
- Analyzing 8th grade test data so that, if needed, remedial work can begin with the student early during their freshman year;
- Increased funding for striving readers to \$200 million;
- \$120 million for an initiative to improve high school math;
- Increased federal support for AP and IB programs by 73%. This increase would provide funding to train teachers to offer college-level courses, as well as help fund low-income students in taking AP and IB tests;
- Continued funding for the state scholars programs;
- Enhanced Pell grants – up to an additional thousand dollars during the first two years of college;
- A new initiative call the “Crayola Credit” that would reimburse teachers up to \$250 for any out of pocket classroom expenses incurred during the year; and
- A new \$500 million initiative incentive fund dedicated to rewarding teachers. Distribution would be controlled by local districts.

IMPACT ON PERKINS: While outlining his plan, President Bush expressed concern regarding the way federal government is funding high school improvement programs.

“...over the years, programs have been developed. The problem is they’re like silos. They’re prescriptions that may not meet the needs of the local high school, or the local school district – you know, a program to **promote vocational education**, or to prepare for college preparation, or to encourage school restructuring. They all sound fine, and they’re all important. But they may not be what is necessary for a particular school district or a high school to achieve the objective of teaching every child to read and write and add and subtract. **So I believe we ought to consolidate the high school improvement programs so that states have the flexibility to choose the program that works best for their students.**”

This proposal, similar to those introduced by the Administration in the past, recommend the consolidation of funding streams. While President Bush’s remarks do not specifically mention Perkins, it can be clearly inferred that the proposal would include block granting Perkins with other federal investments in high schools.

The rationale for doing this is found is a White House fact sheet on the President’s initiative:

“To make the taxpayer dollar work smarter, and still provide funding for states under the High School Initiative, **programs with a narrow focus and programs that have not proven effective in improving our secondary students’ academic achievement will be consolidated.**”

In the last few budgets proposed by the Administration, Perkins was stated as a 'failing' program based on the OMB PART review. Based on this history, it seems likely that Perkins' perceived lack of performance by the Administration will justify its consolidation into a broader high school bill.

More information can be found at

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050112-3.html>.

ACTION NEEDED: To keep us a step ahead of the possible impact from this proposal, please contact your Members of Congress in the House and Senate by phone, fax, or e-mail and:

- Let Members of Congress know that while you support increased emphasis on high school improvement, it should not occur at the expense of other programs already successfully serving students, such as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.
- Ask them to oppose any effort by President Bush to combine Perkins funds into a high school improvement block grant with no funds designated specifically for career technical education.
- Explain that Perkins is working well in your community; that CTE provides relevant learning experiences for students, effective and proven links to skills-building opportunities and improved employment outcomes; that it reduces dropout rates; that employers in your local area continue to need well-trained workers with good skills; and that CTE serves many in your community in a variety of settings, not only in high schools.

For more information, please contact Nichole Jackson, NASDCTEc's Director of Government Relations at 202-737-0303 or njackson@careertech.org.

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